



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEXICAN NATIONAL PLEADS GUILTY TO IMPORTING COCAINE

U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton announced today that 33-year-old Jose Luis De La Torre-Hernandez of Chihuahua, Mexico, pled guilty to importing more than five kilograms of cocaine.

Appearing before United States Magistrate Judge Norbert Garney on Friday, the defendant admitted that he knowingly tried to enter the country at the Ysleta Port of Entry on April 4, 2003 while transporting cocaine. An inspection of the defendant's semi-tractor trailer rig revealed that both of the vehicle's fuel tanks had been cut in half and reattached. The front half of each tank contained fuel, while the back half contained bundles wrapped in gray tape. A total of 149 bundles were removed from the fuel tanks which contained over 385 pounds of cocaine.

The defendant remains in custody. Sentencing will occur before United States District Judge Philip R. Martinez. No date has been scheduled. As a result of his plea, the defendant faces between ten years and life in federal prison.

This case is being investigated by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Assistant United States Attorney Kristal Wade is prosecuting this case on behalf of the Government.

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